



**Florida House of Representatives**  
**Representatives Carole Green**  
*District 75*

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**GREEN FIGHTS FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO MAMMOGRAMS**

TALLAHASSEE – Rep. Carole Green’s (R-Ft. Myers) legislation to increase access to mammogram services for women in Florida passed the House Committee on Health Care.

“Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women in America,” said Rep. Green. “We need to do everything we can to guarantee there are enough radiologists so our mothers, wives, and daughters have the access to the life-saving testing they need.”

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women. Mammography is the best available test for the disease and, if detected early, can decrease mortality by thirty percent. However, the test is imperfect and difficult to read. Thirty percent of breast cancers are not perceptible during the initial mammography screening.

Currently, Florida is facing a shortage of qualified radiologists willing to read and diagnose mammograms. Due to low reimbursement, difficulty of reading the test, and the high level of malpractice claims, mammography radiologists are leaving Florida and breast centers are closing their doors. Additionally, some women have to wait five months for a mammography screening in Broward and six months in Jacksonville.

“Mammography is the best available test for detecting breast cancer, although not a perfect test,” said Dr. Robert J. Entel, of Morton Plant Mease Health Care in Palm Harbor. “As a physician, I am very concerned that if the current trend is not reversed the women of Florida will not have access to mammography services, which would lead to more women with breast cancer.”

To increase access to mammograms, House Bill 1087 would limit a Florida-licensed radiologist’s liability in reading mammograms, except for instances of gross negligence. Despite the flaws of the test, radiologists are held to a perfect standard and are often found at fault if the cancer is not detected. Malpractice suits relating to diagnosis of breast cancer are the most prevalent medical liability claim in the country.

“We should encourage doctors to join our fight against breast cancer, not drive them away,” said Rep. Green. “This legislation is a necessary step in the right direction toward saving lives of Florida women.”

Sixty-four percent of radiology residents would not consider a fellowship in breast imaging. Sixty-two percent would not want to spend more than 20 percent of their time on mammography. Eighty-seven percent rated reading mammograms more stressful than any other x-ray film.

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